

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 1431

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MZ, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES MEDIA ATTACKS ON USG WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER CHISSANO

REF: (A) MAPUTO 1397; (B) MAPUTO 1390; (C) MAPUTO 1116;

(D) MAPUTO A-86

1. SUMMARY: IN PAST COUPLE WEEKS, SEVERAL PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE ATTACKS AGAINST USG HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED OR BROADCAST OVER MOZAMBIQUE MEDIA. THERE WAS ALSO A VICIOUS ATTACK BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR AT RECENT PUBLIC MEETING (REFTEL A). IN MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO, THE AMBASSADOR PROTESTED THESE ATTACKS, EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE THAT GPRM PERMITTED ITS OWN INFORMATION ORGANS TO DISSEMINATE THESE ATTACKS, AND POINTED OUT THAT CUBAN AMBASSADOR HAD GROSSLY VIOLATED DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE BY TAKING ADVANTAGE HIS POSITION TO ATTACK A GOVERNMENT WITH WHOM GPRM MAINTAINS FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO PROMISED DISCUSS MATTER WITH MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS.

END SUMMARY

2. DURING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO ON DECEMBER 9, I RAISED SUBJECT OF SOME PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE ATTACKS ON USG THAT HAVE APPEARED IN PRESS OR ON RADIO IN PAST FEW WEEKS, AS WELL AS AN ATTACK LAUNCHED BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR AT PUBLIC MEETING ON NOVEMBER 30. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, MOZAMBIQUE MEDIA'S COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY ON USG CONFIDENTIAL

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SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN DECIDELY UNFRIENDLY, WITH

PENCHANT FOR HIGHLIGHTING NEGATIVE NEWS STORIES, FOR RE-
PRINTING ANTI-U.S. ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS FORM PRENSA
LATINA, TASS, NOVOSTI, NCNA AND EAST GERMAN PRESS, AND FOR
IMPUTING THE ILLS OF THE WORLD TO "IMPERIALIST, CAPITALISTS
AND NEO-COLONIALIST," OF WHICH USG, OF COURSE, IS
PRIME EXAMPLE. LOCAL DIPLOMATS, WHO READ PRESS CLOSELY,
THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN A SLIGHT LET-UP DURING HEIGHT OF
SECRETARY'S INITIATIVES ON RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA; EMBASSY
THOUGHT SO TOO. IN LAST MONTH. HOWEVER, THE LOCAL MEDIA
HAS REVERTED TO FORM. THE ATTACKS OF LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS
PROMPTED ME TO RAISE MATTER WITH CHISSANO.

3. I CITED THREE EXAMPLES:

A. A CARTOON WHICH APPREARED IN NOVEMBER 28 ISSUED OF THE
WEEKLY JOURNAL TEMP, WHICH DEPICTED SECRETARY KISSINGER
CONSORTING AND PLOTTING WITH IAN SMITH AND PRIME MINISTER
VORSTER. THE CARICATURES AND LANGUAGE ATTRIBUTED TO
SECRETARY WERE INSULTING AND DEMEANING. (TEMPE ISSUE
WILL BE POUCED TO AF/S.)

B. A ZIPA BROADCAST (REPRINTED IN NOTICIAS DA BEIRA
NOVEMBER 28, WHICH ACCUSED THE U.S. "OF SECRETLY ARMING
THE TERRORISTS" AND CALLED SECRETARY KISSINGER, AMONG
OTHER THINGS, AN "ASSASSIN." (REFTEL B)

C. THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER
30 AT PUBLIC CEREMONY JOINTLY SPONSORED BY FRELIMO
AND THE CUBAN EMBASSY, AT WHICH THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR ALLEGED
THAT THE USG HAD PLANNED AND PERPETRATED THE OCTOBER CRASH
NEAR BARBADOS OF A CUBAN AIRLINER, AND IN WHICH HE SOUGHT
TO LINK "YANKEE IMPERIALISM" WITH THE RHODESIAN "MASSACRE"
AT THE ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEE CAMP IN NYAZONIA IN AUGUST.

4. I TOLD CHISSANO THAT I FOUND THESE ATTACKS FALSE,
MISLEADING, OFFENSIVE AND INSULTING. I SAID THAT I WAS
PARTICULARLY DISTURBED THAT IN TWO OF THE CASES, I.E., THE
CARTOON IN TEMPO AND THE ZIPA BROADCAST, THE ATTACKS
WERE PUBLISHED OR BROADCAST BY OFFICIAL ORGANS OF THE
MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT. AS FOR THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S
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SPEECH, I SAID THAT IT WAS A GROSS VIOLATION OF NORMAL DIP-
LOMATIC PRACTICE, AND A DISCOURTESY TO THE GPRM, FOR AN
ACCREDITED AMBASSADOR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS POSITION
TO ATTACK PUBLICLY A GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH THE HOST
GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

5. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT I WAS WELL AWARE THERE
WERE BASIC POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES

AND THAT I FULLY APPRECIATED THAT THE GPRM WOULD CONTINUE TO STATE OPENLY AND FORCEFULLY ITS VIEWS ON POLICY, JUST AS THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO DO. THIS WAS HEALTHY. HOWEVER, I HOPED THAT DUE REGARD WOULD BE SHOWN FOR THE TRUTH AND THAT THE LANGUAGE USED WOULD NOT BE ABUSIVE, INSULTING OR OFFENSIVE, AS UNFORTUNATELY HAD BEEN THE CASE IN THE EXAMPLES I HAD CITED.

6. I LEFT CHIASSANO AN AIDE MEMOIRE SUMMARIZING WHAT I HAD SAID. (COPY BEING POUCED TO AF/S)

7. CHIASSANO LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, AT TIMES NODDING AS IF IN AGREEMENT WITH WHAT I WAS SAYING, AND INTERRUPTING AT ONE POINT TO SAY THAT THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS WERE INDEED "TOUGH." CHIASSANO SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER FURTHER AND TALK TO THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

8. COMMENT: WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE IF MY TALK WITH CHIASSANO WILL DO ANY GOOD. I DOUBT THAT THERE WILL BE ANY SIGNIFICANT LET-UP IN THE ANTI-AMERICAN BIAS IN THE LOCAL MEDIA'S COVERAGE OR COMMENTARY. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THERE MAY BE SOME MODERATION IN THE LANGUAGE USED, AT LEAST FOR A TIME. (THE PROTEST THE EMBASSY LODGED IN SEPTEMBER WITH RESPECT TO MEDIA CHARGES THAT THE USG WAS ASSISTING THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS CLANDESTINE ANTI-FRELIMO BROADCASTS TO MOZAMBIQUE SEEMED TO DO SOME GOOD. AT LEAST SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES ON THE SAME SUBJECT DELETED THE MORE EGREGIOUS ALLEGATIONS. REFTELS C AND D) IN ANY EVENT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT MY DISCUSSION DOES ANY GOOD, I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO PUT ON THE RECORD OUR DISPLEASURE WITH GPRM'S FAILURE TO EXERCISE GREATER CONTROLS OVER ITS OWN MEDIA ORGANS, AS WELL AS OVER THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR.

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